

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
Department of Economics
Spring 2024

ECON 43550: Economics of the Family
M/W 12:30-1:45, 308 DeBartolo Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Friday, 1:15-2:30, or by appointment.

This class is cross-listed with Gender Studies and Health, Humanities, and Society, and counts toward the Poverty Studies Interdisciplinary Minor.

This is a writing-intensive seminar course, in which we will use economic theory and empirical methods to study the family. Topics will include economic models of the household; the determinants of marriage and fertility; how marriage, fertility, and family structure are related to other outcomes (including education, wages, inequality, and labor force participation); and public policies that affect the family and family formation. Students will learn to read, evaluate, and conduct empirical economic research.

The course will have two main components. For the first half of the semester, we will be reading academic journal articles in the area of the economics of the family. The goal is to learn what economists currently know and think about this topic, with an emphasis on empirical work. We will discuss the methods and findings of the papers, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. In the second half, you will develop an empirical project that addresses an original research question. This will involve descriptive data work, regression analysis, and advanced econometric techniques as appropriate. The goal is to do a thorough analysis that addresses issues of data quality, sample selection, and causality. We will rely heavily on material from econometrics (EC 30331) and will use the statistical software package Stata. You will also learn to write like an economist in terms of voice, style, organization, and the conventions of empirical research papers. Finally, you will learn to use library resources to find related literature and data.

On successful completion of this course, you should be knowledgeable about issues in family economics and be a thoughtful consumer and a careful practitioner of economic research. You will be equipped with analytical tools and writing skills that are valued by employers, quantitative graduate programs, and other advanced degree programs.

Canvas: Our website within Canvas will have links to all of the papers we will be discussing in class, as well as handouts, data sets, class notes, assignment information, and more. I will also use it to collect some assignments. It should be very useful to you and you should visit it regularly.

Stata and laptops: Please bring a laptop or tablet to class each day that can be used for reading or writing exercises. In the second half of the semester, you will need to be able to access Stata on a laptop, from our classroom. Stata is now available for free through the university's virtual computer labs, through [insideND here](#). You can also purchase deeply discounted student licenses [here](#). If you need assistance obtaining these resources, please contact the [Office of Student Enrichment](#).

Suggested Supplemental Texts: There is no textbook for this course, but you may find the following to be useful.

Wooldridge, Jeffrey. 2013. Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach. Any edition will work.
Angrist, Joshua and Jorn-Steffen Pischke. 2015. Mastering Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect.
Hoffman, Saul and Susan Averett. 2004. Women and the Economy. 2nd. Ed.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is expected and is part of your participation grade. I will start deducting points after two unexcused absences. Please refer to the University's [Academic Code](#) for policies on excused absences, but I include here a section that is often relevant for students in this class:

A junior or senior with a mandatory admission interview for professional or graduate school, a post-graduate employment interview that cannot be rescheduled, or a presentation of original academic research that requires participation of external reviewers. Students requesting an excused absence under this provision must present documentation of the qualifying event to the student's dean (or dean's designee) at least one week prior to the anticipated absence. The dean (or dean's designee) will determine whether the event qualifies for an excused absence and will notify the instructor(s) of the affected course(s). A student can request excused absences for no more than two class days per semester under this provision. Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to manage scheduling of such events to minimize class absences, and to use fall, Christmas, and spring breaks for scheduling interviews whenever possible.

Honor Code Information: In signing the university's honor code, you agreed not to participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty. I expect you to adhere to this strictly, and any violations will be reported to the Associate Provost. You are expected to submit your own work; plagiarism is unacceptable and will be harshly penalized. Please ask if you have any questions or need clarification about the expectations.

Use of AI: I am open to the use of AI technologies (like ChatGPT) in this course, as long as they are used as a *supplement* to your work and education, and not as a replacement for it. Accordingly, the use of AI is generally acceptable in this course, but, like any other source, must always be attributed in a manner that can be reproduced by the reader. An example of "reproducible" attribution includes the date accessed, the web address or URL accessed, and a description of the prompt. If you use any of these systems to support your work, you will be required to describe the uses and process. When using generative AI technologies as a source of information, you are responsible for assessing the quality, completeness, and accuracy of the cited information. If you have any questions about whether a particular use of AI is acceptable in this course, please talk to me about it in advance.

Privacy: As a learning community, we are collectively responsible for upholding privacy protection standards. While there has always been a need to maintain and respect each other's privacy, it is especially important as aspects of our teaching and learning have moved online, beyond the traditional confines of the classroom. As your instructor, I am committed to protecting your privacy by only using University-approved course technologies and adhering to Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. This includes only using your educational data for legitimate educational purposes and only sharing that with the University for legitimate purposes (for instance, submitting your final grades to the Registrar). As learning community members, I ask that each of us commit to the following basic privacy protection standards:

- Do not post images or identifiable conversations that occur in class or online to social media or to those beyond our learning community (this violates both general privacy and FERPA standards).

Accommodations and Resources: If you are in need of support for your mental or emotional health for any reason, you can talk to me. You can also find helpful resources at <https://supportandcare.nd.edu/>, including information about Care and Wellness Consultants. The Writing Center, Gender Relations Center, Multicultural Student Services and Programs, and International Student and Scholar Affairs are also available on campus. Information on requesting accommodations for students with disabilities is available at <https://supportandcare.nd.edu/for-students/current-students/accessibility-support/>.

Lauren's Promise: I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening or harassing you.

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year old student at the University of Utah and the daughter of economist Jill McCluskey, was murdered on Oct. 22, 2018 by a man she briefly dated. I am committed to doing what I can to make sure this does not happen again. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. If you are experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, or harassment you can report it to me. You should be aware that I am a mandatory reporter, which means that I am required to report these instances to the university's Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator to investigate. **You can also learn about your options (on-campus and off-campus, confidential and not) at <http://titleix.nd.edu>.**

Course content and grading: This semester will be divided into two equal parts as described below, each with their own grade. The two grades will then be averaged at the end to determine your final grade. If there is a curve, it will be applied to the final grades. Note that there is no final exam for this course. The paper is the final, and this has been cleared with the Dean's office.

Late Work: I will accept late work up to 24 hours after the due date, with a 25% penalty. After that, no credit will be given.

Part I

Requirements (and grading weight):

A. Participation (20%)

Everyone is expected to participate in class discussions. Quality is valued over quantity. As described above, I will deduct points from your participation grade for unexcused absences, after the first two. I may also implement quizzes to assess reading that will be part of your participation grade.

B. Problem sets (40%)

On the class schedule for Part I, I have listed due dates for four problem sets. These are designed to review your understanding of the papers and concepts from class, and to prepare you for the midterm. You may be able to work with a classmate on some problem sets.

C. Midterm (40%)

A midterm will be given in class on **March 4**. I will give you more information about its structure and content as this date approaches.

Schedule (*Subject to Change*)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic for Readings and Lectures</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Jan. 17	Introduction, a look at the family	
Jan. 22, 24	Economic Models of Marriage Stevenson and Wolfers 2007	

Jan. 29, 31	Empirical studies of Marriage and Divorce Ribar 2004; McKinnish 2007; Folke & Rickne 2020.	PS1 due 1/29
Feb. 5	Economic Models of Fertility	PS2 due
Feb. 7, 12	Empirical Studies of Fertility Kearney and Levine 2014; Berman, Iannoccone, and Ragusa 2012; Bailey 2010; Albanesi & Olivetti 2016; Buckles, Guldi, & Schmidt 2022	
Feb. 14	Marriage and Inequality	PS3 due
Feb. 19	Intergenerational Transmission, Nature vs. Nurture Sacerdote 2007; Ward 2023; Buckles et al. 2023	
Feb. 21	Family Structure Black, Devereux, & Salvanes 2005; Price 2008; Buckles & Munnich 2011.	
Feb. 26	Public Policy and the Family + Midterm Review	PS4 due 2/26
Feb. 28	Public Policy and the Family In-class presentations	
March 4	Midterm	

Part II

Requirements (and grading weight):

A. Participation (10%) The participation policies for Part I apply in Part II. In addition, some of the assessment of your participation in this half of the course will be based on your contributions in the scheduled sessions for presenting progress on research papers.

B. Problem sets and assignments (40%)

On the class schedule for Part II, I have listed due dates for five assignments. These are designed to guide you in the development of your empirical research paper. I also include the due date for your rough draft; I will comment on it extensively but will not give you a grade on it.

C. Research paper (50%)

The primary assignment for Part II of the course is an empirical research paper. The paper should be 15 pages long. More details will be given in a handout in late September. The final paper is due **in Canvas on May 3** and late submissions will not be accepted. Before this final date, you will hand in a draft on April 26. We will meet on April 29 or 30 to discuss your draft, and you will have an opportunity to revise it before handing in your final paper on the 3rd.

Schedule *(Subject to Change)*

Dates	Lecture Topic	Assignment Due
March 6	Choosing a research topic, research ethics	10 facts
March 18	Stata warm-up, research ethics	
March 20	Conducting and writing literature reviews	
March 25	Visit from Economics Subject Librarian.	Stata problem set
March 27	No class meeting—instead have scheduled office hours to discuss topics	
April 1	No class, Easter Monday	
April 3	The importance of summary statistics.	Proposal & literature review
April 8	Accessing data. In-class Stata lab.	
April 10	Regressions in Stata, formatting results. In-class Stata lab.	Summary statistics table & 1-2 page outline
April 15	Writing like an economist: voice, style, and organization. Introductions.	
April 17	Writing like an economist: presenting and describing empirical work and results.	All tables/figures
April 22	In-class writing lab, individual feedback on tables/figures.	
April 24	In-class peer review of drafts	Rough draft due by noon on April 26 (ungraded but mandatory)
April 29	No in-person class – scheduled appointments to discuss drafts and plans for revision.	
May 1	Share papers in class (low stakes)	Final paper due May 3.

Resources

A. Economic Models of Marriage

Stevenson, Betsey and Justin Wolfers. 2007. “Marriage and Divorce: Changes and Their Driving Forces.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(2).

Stevenson, Betsey and Justin Wolfers. 2008. “Marriage and the Market.” *Cato Unbound*. Accessed June 24, 2011.

Becker, Gary. 1981. *A Treatise on the Family*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Bergstrom, Theodore C. 1997. "A Survey of Theories of the Family." In *Handbook of Population and Family Economics*. Edited by M. R. Rosenzweig and O. Stark. Elsevier. Vol. 1A, pp. 21-79

B. Marriage and Divorce

McKinnish, Terra. 2007. "Sexually Integrated Workplaces and Divorce: Another Form of On-the-Job Search." *Journal of Human Resources*, 42(2), pp. 331-352.

Ribar, David. 2004. "What Do Social Scientists Know About the Benefits of Marriage? A Review of Quantitative Methodologies." IZA Discussion Paper No. 998.

Waite, Linda. 1995. "Does Marriage Matter?" *Demography*, 32(14), pp. 438-508.

Finlay, Keith and David Neumark. 2010. "Is Marriage Always Good for Children?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(4), 1046.

Korenman, Sanders and David Neumark. 1991. "Does Marriage Really Make Men More Productive?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 26(2) 282-307.

Gray, Jeffrey S. 1997. "The Fall in Men's Return to Marriage: Declining Productivity Effects or Changing Selection?" *The Journal of Human Resources*, 32(3), 481-504.

Dahl, Gordon. 2010. "Early Teen Marriage and Future Poverty." *Demography*, 47(3), 689-718.

Gruber, Jonathan. 2004. "Is Making Divorce Easier Bad for Children? The Long-Run Implications of Unilateral Divorce." *Journal of Labor Economics*, 22(4): 799-833.

Cornelson, K. and Siow, A., 2016. "A Quantitative Review of Marriage Markets: How Inequality is Remaking the American Family by Carbone and Cahn." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 54(1), pp.193-207.

Folke, O. and Rickne, J., 2020. "All the single ladies: Job promotions and the durability of marriage." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 12(1), pp.260-87.

Rosenfeld, M.J., Thomas, R.J. and Hausen, S., 2019. "Disintermediating your friends: How online dating in the United States displaces other ways of meeting." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(36), pp.17753-17758.

Coile, C.C. and Duggan, M.G., 2019. "When Labor's Lost: Health, Family Life, Incarceration, and Education in a Time of Declining Economic Opportunity for Low-Skilled Men." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 33(2), pp.191-210.

Abramowitz, J., 2016. "Saying, 'I don't': The effect of the Affordable Care Act young adult provision on marriage." *Journal of Human Resources*, 51(4), pp.933-960.

C. Fertility

Becker, Gary. 1960. "An Economic Analysis of Fertility," in *Demographic and Economic Change in Developed Countries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960.

- Becker, Gary and H. Gregg Lewis. 1973. "On the Interaction between the Quantity and Quality of Children." *Journal of Political Economy*, 81(2): S279-88.
- Kearney, M. S., & Levine, P. B. 2014. "Media Influences on Social Outcomes: The Impact of MTV's 16 and Pregnant on Teen Childbearing" (No. w19795). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Angrist, Joshua, Victor Lavy, and Analia Schollosser. 2010. "Multiple Experiments for the Causal Link Between the Quantity and Quality of Children," *Journal of Labor Economics*, 28(4): 773-823.
- Lindo, Jason. 2010. "Are Children Really Inferior Goods?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(2): 301.
- Chandra, Amitabh and Stacy Dickert-Conlin. 1999. "Taxes & the Timing of Births." *Journal of Political Economy*, 107(1).
- Buckles, Kasey and Daniel Hungerman. 2013. "Season of Birth: Old Questions, New Answers." *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 95(3): 711-724.
- Berman, Eli, Laurence Iannaccone, and Giuseppe Ragusa. 2012. "From Empty Pews to Empty Cradles: Fertility Decline Among European Catholics." *NBER Working Paper #18350*.
- Buckles, Kasey, Melanie Guldi, and Lucie Schmidt. 2019. "Fertility Trends in the United States, 1980-2017: The Role of Unintended Births." *NBER Working Paper #25521*.
- Miller, C.C., 2018. The Relentlessness of Modern Parenting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/25/upshot/the-relentlessness-of-modern-parenting.html>.
- Goldberg, Michelle. 2018. Want More Babies? You Need Less Patriarchy. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/25/opinion/american-birthrate-patriarchy.html?em_pos=small&emc=edit_ty_20180525&nl=opinion-today&nl_art=7&nlid=47698275emc%3Dedit_ty_20180525&ref=headline&te=1
- Doepke, M. and F. Zilibotti. 2019. The Parent Trap: How Economic Inequality Gives Rise to Hyper-Parenting. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2019/02/22/feature/how-economic-inequality-gives-rise-to-hyper-parenting/?p9w22b2p=b2p22p9w00098>
- Doepke, M., Sorrenti, G. and Zilibotti, F. 2019. "The economics of parenting." *Annual Review of Economics*, 11, pp. 55-84.
- Bassi, V. and Rasul, I., 2017. "Persuasion: A case study of papal influences on fertility-related beliefs and behavior." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 9(4), pp.250-302.
- Sussman, Annal Louie. 2019. The End of Babies. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/opinion/sunday/capitalism-children.html>

D. Family Structure

- Black, Sandra, Paul Devereux, and Kjell Salvanes. 2005. "The More the Merrier? The Effect of Family Size and Birth Order on Children's Education." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120(2): 669.

Black, Sandra, Paul Devereux, and Kjell Salvanes. 2010. "Small Family, Smart Family? Family Size and the IQ Scores of Young Men." *Journal of Human Resources* 45(1): 33-58.

Buckles, Kasey and Elizabeth Munnich. 2012. "Birth Spacing and Child Outcomes." *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(3): 613-642.

Price, Joseph. 2008. "Parent-Child Quality Time: Does Birth Order Matter?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 43(1): 240.

Kaestner, Robert. 1997. "Are Brothers Really Better? Sibling Sex Composition and Educational Achievement." *Journal of Human Resources*, 32(2): 250-284.

Sacerdote, Bruce. 2007. "How Large are the Effects from Changes in Family Environment? A Study of Korean American Adoptees." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(1): 119.

Björklund, A., Lindahl, M., & Plug, E. 2006. "The origins of intergenerational associations: Lessons from Swedish adoption data." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 121(3), 999-1028.

Ward, Z., 2023. "Intergenerational Mobility in American History: Accounting for Race and Measurement Error." *American Economic Review*, 113(12), 3213-3248.

Buckles, Kasey, Joseph Price, Zach Ward, Haley Wilbert. 2023. "Family Trees and Falling Apples: Historical Intergenerational Mobility Estimates for Women and Men." (No. w31918). **National Bureau of Economic Research.**

E. Family and Women's Labor Force Outcomes

Goldin, Claudia. 2004. "The Long Road to the Fast Track: Career and Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 596: 20-35.

Lundborg, P., Plug, E., and Rasumssen, A. W. 2017. "Can Women Have Children and a Career? IV Evidence from IVF Treatments." *American Economic Review*, 107(6), 1611-37.

Angrist, Joshua and William N. Evans. 1998. "Children and Their Parents' Labor Supply: Evidence from Exogenous Variation in Family Size," *American Economic Review*, 88: 450-77.

Cortes, P., and Tessada, J. 2011. "Low-skilled immigration and the labor supply of highly skilled women." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 88-123.

Bana, S., Bedard, K., & Rossin-Slater, M. 2018. "The Impacts of Paid Family Leave Benefits: Regression Kink Evidence from California Administrative Data." (No. w24438). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Balser, C., Hall, C., & Bukowinski, A. 2020. "The Effect of Expanding Paid Maternity Leave on Maternal Health: Evidence from the United States Air Force & Army. *Working paper*, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3601018.

Waldfogel, J. 1998a. "Understanding the 'Family Gap' in Pay for Women with Children," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12: 137-156.

Hotz, Joseph, Susan McElroy, and Seth Sanders. 2005. "Teenage Childbearing and Its Life Cycle Consequences: Exploiting a Natural Experiment," *The Journal of Human Resources* 40(3): 682-715.

Waldfogel, J. 1998b. "The Family Gap for Young Women in the United States and Britain: Can Maternity Leave Make a Difference?," *Journal of Labor Economics*, 16(3): 505-545.

Greenwood, Jeremy, Ananth Seshadri and Mehmet Yorukoglu. 2005. "Engines of Liberation," *Review of Economic Studies* 72: 109-133.

Kleven, H., Landais, C. and Søgaard, J.E., 2019. "Children and gender inequality: Evidence from Denmark." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 11(4), pp.181-209.

F. Public Policy and the Family

Bailey, Martha. 2010. "Momma's Got the Pill': How Comstock and *Griswold v. Connecticut* Shaped U.S. Childbearing," *American Economic Review*, 100(1): 98-129.

Gruber, Jonathan, Phillip Levine, and Douglas Staiger. 1999. "Abortion Legalization and Child Living Circumstances: Who is the 'Marginal Child?'" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 114(1): 263-291.

Buckles, Kasey, Melanie Guldi and Joseph Price. 2010. "Changing the Price of Marriage: Evidence from Blood Test Requirements." *Journal of Human Resources*, 46(3): 539.

Meyer, Bruce and Dan Rosenbaum. 2001. "Welfare, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the Labor Supply of Single Mothers," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 116: 1063-1114.

Gelbach, Jonah. 2002. "Public Schooling for Young Children and Maternal Labor Supply," *American Economic Review*, 92(1): 307.

Lalive, Rafael and Josef Zweimuller. 2009. "How does parental leave affect fertility and return to work? Evidence from two natural experiments," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124(3): 1363-1402.

Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence Katz. 2002. "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions." *Journal of Political Economy*, 110(4).

Baughman, Reagan and Stacy Dickert-Conlin. 2003. "Did Expanding the EITC Promote Motherhood?" *The American Economic Review* 93(2): 247.

Brien, Michael, Stacy Dickert-Conlin and David Weaver. 2004. "Widows Waiting to Wed? (Re)Marriage and Economic Incentives in Social Security Widow Benefits." *The Journal of Human Resources*, 39(3): 585-623.

Albanesi, Stefania and Claudia Olivetti. 2016. "Gender Roles and Medical Progress." *Journal of Political Economy*, 124(3), pp.650-695.

Francis. 2016. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation. *Amoris Laetitia*, 8.